



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Tony Evers, Governor | Mary M. Kolar, Secretary

April 30, 2020

Dear Members, Families, and Friends:

Thank you for your continued support of the team here at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for the members, their family and friends, and the staff here, yet your understanding and support are helping us to thrive during this unique time.

Each day I breathe a sigh of relief and am grateful that we continue to have **zero** cases of COVID-19 at our Wisconsin Veterans Homes. We must continue all the health and safety practices that we have implemented that have led us to this point.

We have read or seen from news sources the effects this virus has had on other senior living homes in this country. While we know that it is been disruptive, we continue to be grateful to everyone who abides by the Safer at Home Order. By following this order, we collectively, are keeping our nursing and other staff healthy so that they do not bring this terrible virus into our Home.

While we continue to employ our health and safety practices and comply with CDC recommendations, we are finding new ways to keep members engaged as well as maintain regular healthy living programs. You may be curious what this is like since we have had to make many changes in the past several weeks.

Activities are done on the units in small groups with as much social distancing as the activity will allow. Some activities do require closer contact than 6 feet to participate, however our members are encouraged to wash their hands and wear their cotton face masks and the vast majority have not left the building or had a visitor from the outside for more than 30 days. Some of these activities have found increased participation because the groups are smaller and more local to their units.

When it comes to meals, we are serving members in their rooms. However, if the member wants, we can set their meal up in the doorway of their room so they can see and talk to others in the hall and still have conversation with their friends. Some members who need assistance from staff are brought to the common dining area on the unit but are spaced at least 6 feet apart and most often at a table of one.

These are a new way of doing things. But the members have adapted, and we have found ways that we can all still connect.

Finally, thank you! We absolutely appreciate everything that you are doing to help us make the best out of this situation. This past weekend, we were delighted to see signs thanking staff that our generous friends and supporters put up. All around this community – at grocery stores, gas stations, and other places - people are stopping to tell our nursing staff thank you. On social media and elsewhere, our friends are proudly sharing pictures and telling stories about the outstanding people who work here. They are displaying hearts in their windows and putting blue ribbons on their trees, all in support of their work and dedication to our members. Our staff are truly superstars and your kindness, and the kindness of others, raises all our spirits!

Please keep reaching out to your loved ones. If you need help connecting with them, let us know and we help. And, as always, we look forward to the day when we can see you in person again.

Sincerely,

Homes Division Administrator